

12.705 CLANDESTINE LAB TEAM

Definitions:

Clandestine Lab - an illegal operation using chemicals and/or equipment to manufacture a controlled substance. Offenders manufacture a variety of illicit drugs in such labs including marijuana, methamphetamine, amphetamine, MDMA (ecstasy), PCP, and LSD.

Purpose:

To inform officers about the potential dangers and risks associated with clandestine labs and provide guidelines for the use of the Clandestine Lab Team and equipment.

Policy:

Officers investigating or having knowledge of a clandestine lab will notify the Clandestine Lab Team. A Clandestine Lab Team member will respond to assist in the identification, handling, and processing of the lab.

The first priority at the scene of a clandestine lab is to prevent and/or limit exposure to yourself and the public.

Information:

All clandestine labs are dangerous and contain chemicals that can pose both long and short term health risks. This is true whether the lab is fully operational, dismantled, in storage, or in transport. Clandestine drug labs cause three main types of harm: physical injury from explosions, fire, chemical burns, and toxic fumes; environmental hazards; and child endangerment.

Simple procedures to reduce or limit exposure to risks when dealing with clandestine labs:

- Do not eat or drink.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Do not open containers or put your face over an open container.
- Do not turn lights on or off.
- Do not taste, smell, or touch any substance.
- Do not unplug or plug in objects.

Many of the hazards associated with labs are derived from ingredients found in products such as cold medicine, nail polish remover, dietary supplements, starter fluid, anti-freeze, paint thinner, and drain cleaner.

Indications of a clandestine lab include:

1. Strong smell, possibly resembling urine, or an unusual chemical smell like ammonia, acetone, or ether.
2. Extra efforts made to cover windows or reinforce doors.

3. Lack of trash placed outside for pickup.
4. Lab materials surrounding the property, i.e., fuel cans, red stained coffee filters, glassware, and duct tape.
5. Soft drink bottles with hoses attached, large amounts of empty blister packs for cold/asthma medication.
6. Chemical containers or paraphernalia such as glassware and rubber tubing.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has established guidelines and requirements governing exposure to clandestine drug labs.

Persons who may have been contaminated should be isolated until the Cincinnati Fire Department arrives for proper decontamination. Contaminated individuals should be kept outside and away from others. Do not place them in a location likely to contaminate other people and/or property.

Do not touch anything inside a suspected lab. Be cautious of any chemical which may have been dumped inside or outside of a lab. Do not operate any electrical appliances or equipment which is not intrinsically safe, i.e., flashlights, light switches, cameras, etc. Department hand-held radios with a green dot on the bottom are considered to be intrinsically safe.

Anything that has been in contact with a potentially hazardous material is considered contaminated and must be disposed of in a manner prescribed by law.

The Clandestine Lab Team responds to reports of labs and is staffed with officers trained and equipped to enter, assess, and process clandestine drug production sites.

In addition to the chemical and process hazards at clandestine labs, officers should be aware of antipersonnel devices or "booby traps." These devices are designed to protect the lab, serve as warning devices to aid in the escape of suspects, and possibly incapacitate law enforcement officers.

Procedure:

- A. Duties and Responsibilities of First Officer on Scene:
 - 1. Notify Police Communications Section (PCS) of relevant information.
 - 2. Request a supervisor and any necessary assistance.
 - 3. Suggest safe response routes for other responding personnel.
- B. Supervisory Duties and Responsibilities:
 - 1. Establish an outer perimeter to control pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
 - 2. Establish an inner perimeter to isolate and contain the clandestine lab.
 - 3. Request Cincinnati Fire Department (CFD) respond and advise them of the incident. If there is no fire, smoke, or injury, request CFD to stand by at a designated area.
 - 4. Request PCS notify the Clandestine Lab Team and Central Vice Control Section to respond.
 - 5. Brief the first Clandestine Lab Team member upon arrival.
 - 6. Based on the size and type of clandestine lab, responding supervisors should determine the need to:
 - a. Establish a command post and staging area located upwind from the clandestine lab.
 - b. Appoint a recorder and maintain a log of events, including action taken, personnel on scene, traffic posts established, and persons entering and exiting the incident site.
 - c. Evacuate all civilians at least 600 feet away from the affected area.
 - 1) If it is impractical to evacuate civilians 600 feet away, evacuate a minimum of three floors above and below the clandestine lab.
- C. Police Communications Section will:
 - 1. Notify the Clandestine Lab Team coordinator or designee.
 - 2. Notify a Central Vice Control Section supervisor.
- D. Clandestine Lab Team personnel will:
 - 1. Confer with the ranking supervisor on scene of the incident and assume control of the scene until a Clandestine Lab Team supervisor arrives.
 - 2. Maintain a log of events, action, and personnel.

3. Work in conjunction with and assist members of Central Vice Control Section in their investigation.
- E. Equipment Inventory:
1. The Clandestine Lab Team Coordinator or designee will inventory and inspect Lab Team equipment after each training session and activation.
- F. Recall Roster:
1. Clandestine Lab Team members will immediately notify the Clandestine Lab Team Coordinator of any change of address or phone numbers.
 2. The Clandestine Lab Team Coordinator will provide an updated personnel recall roster to PCS with changes.